

CRS GNL
12/2000

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

RE: The Chemical Recovery Systems Site, Elyria, Ohio
General Notice of Potential Liability and
Request for Information

Dear Sir or Madam:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has documented the release or threatened release of hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants at the above referenced Site, and is planning to spend public funds to control and investigate these releases. This action will be taken by U.S. EPA pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. §9601 et seq., (CERCLA) as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-499, 100 Stat. 1613 (1986) (SARA), unless U.S. EPA determines that such action will be done properly by a responsible party. Responsible parties under CERCLA include the current and former owners and operators, and persons who generated the hazardous substances or were involved in transport, treatment, or disposal of them at the Site. Under Section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §9607(a), where the Agency uses public funds to achieve the cleanup of the hazardous substances, responsible parties are liable for all costs associated with the removal or remedial action and all other necessary costs incurred in cleaning up the Site, including investigation, planning and enforcement.

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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The U.S. EPA is currently planning to conduct the following actions at the above referenced Site.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
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- 7.
- 8.

U.S. EPA has received information that [you/your organization] may have owned or operated or generated or transported hazardous substances that were disposed of at the Site. By this letter, U.S. EPA notifies you of your potential liability with regard to this matter and encourages you, as a potentially responsible party, to reimburse U.S. EPA for costs incurred to date and to voluntarily perform or finance the response activities that U.S. EPA has determined or will determine are required at the Site. U.S. EPA is willing to discuss with you the entry of an appropriate administrative consent order under which you would perform or finance response activities and reimburse U.S. EPA for its costs. If a consent order cannot be promptly concluded, U.S. EPA may issue a unilateral order under Section 106 of CERCLA, requiring you to perform specified work. Under Sections 106 and 107 of CERCLA, you may be liable for reimbursement of U.S. EPA's costs, for statutory penalties, and for treble damages for noncompliance with such an order. If you are a qualified small business, enclosed is an U.S. EPA Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act information sheet which may be helpful if you are subject to an U.S. EPA enforcement action. **[The previous sentence can be deleted if the PRP is an individual or is clearly a large business. Provide a copy of the information sheet to any known or suspected small business.]**

As a potentially responsible party, you should notify U.S. EPA in writing within ten (10) days of receipt of this letter of your willingness to perform or finance the activities described above. If U.S. EPA does not receive a timely response, U.S. EPA will assume that [you do/your organization does] not wish to negotiate a resolution of [your/its] potential responsibility in connection with the Site and that [you have/your organization has] declined any involvement in performing the response activities.

Your letter should indicate the appropriate name, address, and telephone number for further contact with you. If you are already involved in discussions with state or local authorities, engaged in voluntary cleanup action or involved in a lawsuit regarding this Site, you should continue such activities as you see fit. This letter is not intended to advise you or direct you to restrict or discontinue any such activities; however, you are advised to report the status of those discussions or actions in your response to this letter and to provide a copy of your response to any other parties involved in those discussions or actions.

In addition, U.S. EPA is seeking to obtain certain other information from you pursuant to its authority under Section 104(e) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §9604(e), for the purpose of enforcing CERCLA and to assist in determining the need for response to a release of hazardous substance(s) under CERCLA. The Administrator of the U.S. EPA has the authority to require any person who has or may have information relevant to any of the following to furnish U.S. EPA with such information: (1) the identification, nature or quantity of materials which have been or are generated, treated, stored or disposed of at, or transported to, a facility; (2) the nature or extent of a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant at or from a facility; and (3) the ability of a person to pay for or perform a cleanup. Pursuant to Section 104(e) of CERCLA, you are hereby requested to submit the following information concerning the Chemical Recovery Systems Site on 142 Locust Street in Elyria, Ohio.

1. Identify all persons consulted in the preparation of the answers to these questions.
2. Identify all documents consulted, examined, or referral to in the preparation of the answers to these questions and provide copies of all such documents.
3. If you have reason to believe that there may be persons able to provide a more detailed or complete response to any question or who may be able to provide additional responsive documents, identify such persons.
4. List the EPA Identification Numbers of the Respondent.
5. Identify the acts or omissions of any person, other than your employees, contractors, or agents, that may have caused the release or threat of release of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants and damages resulting therefrom.

6. Identify all persons including respondent's employees, who have knowledge or information about the generation, use, treatment, storage, disposal or other handling of material at or transportation of materials to the Site (operating as Obitts Chemical Company or Chemical Recovery Systems, Inc., at 124 Locust Street, Elyria, Ohio).

7. Describe all arrangements that Respondent may have or may have had with each of the following companies and persons:

- a) Obitts Chemical Company
- b) Russell Obitts
- c) Chemical Recovery Systems, Inc.
- d) Peter Shagnea
- e) James Freeman

8. Set forth the dates during which the Respondent engaged in any of the following activities:

- a) generation of hazardous materials which were potentially or ultimately disposed of at the CRS Site;
- b) transportation of any material to the CRS Site;
- c) operation of the CRS Site.

9. Identify all persons, including yourself, who may have arranged for disposal or treatment, or arranged for transportation for disposal or treatment, of waste materials, including hazardous substances, at the CRS Site. In addition, identify the following:

- a) The persons with whom you or such other persons made such arrangements;
- b) Every date on which such arrangements took place;
- c) For each transaction, the nature or the waste material or hazardous substance, including the chemical content, characteristics, physical state (e.g., solid, liquid), and the process for which the substance was used or the process which generated the substance;
- d) The owner of the waste materials or hazardous substances so accepted or transported;

- e) The quantity of the waste materials or hazardous substances involved (weight or volume) in each transaction and the total quantity for all transactions;
- f) All tests, analyses, and analytical results concerning the waste materials;
- g) The persons(s) who selected the Site as the place to which the waste materials or hazardous substances were to be transported;
- h) The amount paid in connection with each transaction, the method of payment, and the identity of the person from whom payment was received;
- i) Where the person identified in g., above, intended to have such hazardous substances or waste materials transported and all evidence of this intent;
- j) Whether the waste materials or hazardous substances involved in each transaction were transshipped through, or were stored or held at, any intermediate site prior to final treatment or disposal;
- k) What was actually done to the waste materials or hazardous substances once they were brought to the Site;
- l) The final disposition of each of the waste materials or hazardous substances involved in such transactions;
- m) The measures taken by you to determine the actual methods, means, and site of treatment or disposal of the waste material and hazardous substance involved in each transaction.
- n) The type and number of containers in which the waste materials or hazardous substances were contained when they were accepted for transport, and subsequently until they were deposited at the Site, and all markings on such containers;
- o) The price paid for (i) transport, (ii) disposal, or (iii) both of each waste material and hazardous substance.

p) All documents containing information responsive to a - o above, or in lieu of identification of all relevant documents, provide copies of all such documents.

q) All persons with knowledge, information, or documents responsive to a - p above.

10. Identify all liability insurance policies held by Respondent from 1960 to the present. In identifying such policies, state the name and address of each insurer and of the insured, the amount of coverage under each policy, the commencement and expiration dates for each policy, whether or not the policy contains a "pollution exclusion" clause, and whether the policy covers or excludes sudden, nonsudden, or both types of accidents. In lieu of providing this information, you may submit complete copies of all relevant insurance policies.

11. Provide copies of all income tax returns sent to the Federal Internal Revenue Service in the last three years.

12. If Respondent is a Corporation, respond to the following requests:

a) Provide a copy of the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Respondent.

b) Provide Respondent's financial statements for the past five fiscal years, including, but not limited to those filed with the Internal Revenue Service and Securities and Exchange Commission.

c) Identify all of Respondent's current assets and liabilities and the person who currently own or are responsible for such assets and liabilities.

d) Identify the Parent Corporation and all Subsidiaries of the Respondent.

13. If Respondent is a Partnership, provide copies of the Partnership Agreement.

14. If Respondent is a Trust, provide all relevant agreements and documents to support this claim.

This request is directed to your company, its officers, directors, and employees, and its subsidiaries, divisions, facilities and their officers, directors, and employees. The information sought herein must be sent to U.S. EPA within thirty (30) calendar days of your receipt of this letter. Failure to respond fully and truthfully to this request, or to adequately justify any failure to respond, may result in an enforcement action against you by U.S. EPA under Section 104 of CERCLA, as amended. The information requested herein must be provided notwithstanding its possible characterization as confidential information or trade secrets. You may request however, that any such information be handled as confidential business information. A request for confidential treatment must be made when the information is provided, since any information not so identified will not be accorded this protection by the U.S. EPA. Information claimed as confidential will be handled in accordance with the provisions of 40 C.F.R. Part 2.

The written statements submitted pursuant to this request must be notarized and submitted under an authorized signature certifying that all information contained therein is true and accurate to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief. Moreover, any documents submitted to U.S. EPA pursuant to this information request should be certified as true and authentic to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief. Should the signatory find, at any time after the submittal of the requested information, that any portion of the submitted information is false, the signatory should so notify U.S. EPA. If any answer certified as true should be found to be untrue, the signatory can and may be prosecuted pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §1001. The U.S. EPA has the authority to use the information requested herein in any administrative, civil or criminal action.

Your responses to both the notice of potential liability within ten (10) days and the information requests within thirty (30) days, should be sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Deena Sheppard-Johnson, SR-6J
Remedial Enforcement Support Section
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

If you have any legal questions, please call Thomas Nash, our attorney, at (312) 353-0552. If you have technical questions about this Site, please call Gwendolyn Massenburg, Remedial Project Manager, at (312) 886-0983. Address all other questions to Deena Sheppard-Johnson, Enforcement Specialist, at (312) 886-7048.

Due to the nature of the problem at this Site and the attendant legal ramifications, U.S. EPA strongly encourages you to submit a written response within the time frames specified herein. We hope you will give this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely,

Wendy L. Carney, Chief
Remedial Response Branch #1

Enclosures: Small Business Notice

Attachments: 1: Site History
2: Instructions
3: Definitions
4: Confidential Business Information
5: Legal Authority

bcc: Thomas Nash, ORC (C-14J)
Gwendolyn Massenburg, RPM (SR-6J)
Margaret Herring, CI (SR-6J)
Reginald Arkell, CI (C-14J)
File

Attachment 1 SITE HISTORY

The Chemical Recovery Systems Site ("CRS Site") is located at 142 Locust Street in Elyria, Ohio. The CRS Site is bordered on the west by the East Branch of the Black River, to the north and east by the Engelhard (formerly Harshaw) Chemical Company, and to the south by M&M Aluminum Siding Company. The CRS Site is located in a predominantly industrial and commercial area near the central business district of Elyria. The CRS Site consists of a four acre parcel that is currently leased to M&M Aluminum which uses the Site property to store aluminum siding. Most of the four acre parcel is empty. Two buildings are currently on the CRS Site: a former warehouse and office building and the masonry shell of a building that housed a Rodney Hunt still. These buildings are located in the southeast corner of the CRS Site. The foundation of a building that housed a Brighton still is located in the northeast corner of the CRS Site. The Site is fenced on all sides except the side bounded by the East Branch of the Black River.

Beginning no later than the 1940s the CRS Site was used for commercial and industrial purposes such as a coal yard. During the 1950s, Harshaw Chemical briefly leased the CRS Site to store saggars. In 1960, Russell Obitts leased the CRS Site property and relocated his existing business, the Obitts Chemical Company, which reclaimed spent organic solvents, to the CRS Site property. Later Russell Obitts and Dorothy Obitts purchased this property.

In 1974, Chemical Recovery Systems, Inc., a Michigan corporation ("CRS, Inc., - MI"), assumed operations at the CRS Site through a stock purchase agreement with the Obitts Chemical Company. In a separate agreement CRS, Inc., - MI leased the CRS Site property from Russell Obitts and Dorothy Obitts in a lease agreement with an option to purchase. A year later CRS, Inc., - MI exercised its purchase option. CRS, Inc., - MI continued operations at the CRS Site until 1981.

Operating as Obitts Chemical Company and then as CRS, Inc., - MI the facility located on the Site received spent organic solvents from industrial facilities and reclaimed the solvents through distillation processes. Both operators hauled contaminated solvents to the Site facility by their own tanker trucks and stake trucks hauling 55 gallon drums. Spent solvents were stored in above ground tanks and 55 gallon drums. Soil contamination occurred through leakage and spills. Spent solvents that were transported to the CRS Site include, but are not limited to, the following: acetone, hexane, isopropyl alcohol, methylene ethyl ketone (MEK), tetrachloroethane, toluene, trichloroethane, and xylene. Analysis of samples that

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("U.S. EPA") collected on November 26, 1979, at the CRS Site detected PCE, ethyl benzene, and naphthalene. A solvent sample collected on February 5, 1980 contained toluene, ethyl benzene, xylene, and naphthalene. During a visit on February 5, 1980, by U.S. EPA to the CRS Site an employee of the facility identified specific solvents reclaimed as well as paint solvents generally.

Because the CRS Site posed imminent danger to the local population and the environment, U.S. EPA initiated an action under the Resource Recovery and Conservation Act ("RCRA"). On October 7, 1980, the U.S. Department of Justice ("U.S. DOJ"), on behalf of U.S. EPA, filed an action against CRS, Inc., - MI in the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio, to abate an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health and the environment from the CRS Site. On July 12, 1983, The District Court entered a Consent Decree that required CRS, Inc., - MI to take these and other actions: excavate all visibly contaminated soils identified during a joint U.S. EPA and CRS, Inc., - MI inspection; excavate the perimeter of the Brighton still to a specified depth and distance; dispose of the excavated soil at an approved waste disposal site; backfill the excavated areas; and grade the CRS Site. After its inspection of the CRS Site November 7, 1983, U.S. EPA concluded that CRS, Inc., - MI was in compliance with the July 12, 1983 Consent Decree.

Because hazardous substances released at the CRS-Site remain in the soil and groundwater at elevated levels, U.S. EPA is now taking response actions, under the authority of Section 104 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 and its amendments.

In order to relieve the dangers and threats to human health and the environment as quickly as possible, U.S. EPA is currently planning to conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) at the above reference facility.

The primary objective of the RI/FS is to gather sufficient data to support the selection of the site remedy that will reduce or eliminate risk associated with the contamination at the site. The Remedial Investigation (RI) involves:

- Characterizing the nature and extent of the risks associated with the contamination in the site soils, sediment, surface water, and groundwater;
- Determining the potential for contaminant transport via air, groundwater, and sediment/surface water pathways;
- Conducting a baseline public health evaluation and an ecological risk assessment; and
- Conducting treatability studies to evaluate the performance and cost of the treatment technologies and to support the design of the selected remedies.

The remedial investigation must include waste characterization, geophysical surveys, excavation of test pits, soil sampling and analysis, groundwater sampling and analysis, and the determination of the site geologic and hydrogeologic characteristics.

The primary objective of Feasibility Study (FS) is to develop and analyze a range of remedial action alternatives through the application of the nine established evaluation criteria. The FS is comprised of two main phases:

- Development and screening of alternatives; and
- Detailed analysis of the alternatives.

It is important to be aware that, the FS is performed concurrently with the RI. This is because data collected in the RI influences the development of the remedial action alternatives in the FS, which in turn affects the data needs and scope of the treatability studies and subsequent field studies.

Prior to the start of any of these activities, the following plans will have to be developed and approved by the U. S. EPA:

- Site work plan
- Site health and safety plan;

- Site security plan;
- Site sampling and analysis plan for the Toxic Compound List/ Toxic Analyte List and Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedures parameters.
- Site Quality Assurance Project Plan
- Site Community Relations Plan

For more information regarding policy and guidance conducting RI/FS studies see OSWER Directive (9355.3-01) Guidance for Conducting Remedial Investigations and Feasibility Studies (RI/FS) Under CERCLA, October 1988.

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